

Museum of Natural History, Norman) for a skeleton of *A. rapax*; and Robert Prys-Jones for information regarding specimens in the British Museum (Tring). I am also grateful to William S. Clark for discussions and information. The photographs are by Victor E. Krantz, Smithsonian Institution.

References:

- Clark, W. S. 1992. The taxonomy of Steppe and Tawny Eagles, with criteria for separation of museum specimens and live eagles. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 112: 150–157.
- Wood, D. S. & Schnell, G. D. 1986. *Revised World Inventory of Avian Skeletal Specimens*, 1986. American Ornithologists' Union and Oklahoma Biological Survey, Norman, Oklahoma.

Address: Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, U.S.A.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1994

Report on three collections of birds from Liberia

by Robert W. Dickerman, W. Parker Cane, Michael F. Carter, Angela Chapman & C. Gregory Schmitt

Received 20 November 1993

The American Museum of Natural History has recently received three collections of birds made in Liberia. M. F. Carter collected in Bong, Cape Mount and Sinoe Counties (1985–86); W. P. Cane, M. F. Carter and R. W. Dickerman collected at Greenville, Sinoe County, Juarzon [also Zuazhon on some maps], Sinoe Co. and on the Upper Dugbe River (c. 20 km SSE of Jaoudi) and at Jaoudi Town, Grand Gedeh County (1988); and M. F. Carter, A. Chapman, R. W. Dickerman and C. G. Schmitt collected in the Wonigizi Mountains, Lofa County (1990). Skeletons and liquid preserved (pickled) specimens formed major elements in each of these collections. Frozen and alcohol preserved tissues were collected in 1990.

Three notes have been published to date (Cane & Carter 1988, Dickerman 1989, 1993), and two (noted in text) are in preparation or are in press. We here report specimens that augment the distribution, status or nomenclature of the respective species in Liberia as presented by Urban *et al.* (1986), Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986), Gatter (1988), Fry *et al.* (1988, 1992) and Keith *et al.* (1992). In the text, British Museum (Natural History) is abbreviated to BMNH; type locality is abbreviated to TL and “western” refers to populations with ranges west of the Dahomey forest gap. All Mount Nimba records are from Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986) and that reference is usually not repeated. All measurements are in millimeters.

LEMON DOVE *Columba larvata* subsp.

Two males collected in the Wonigizi Mountains in March 1990 represent the third locality record for the species in Liberia. The first Liberian specimen was referred to the subspecies *plumbescens* (TL Cameroon) by Peters (1937); the Mount Nimba specimens to *simplex* (TL São Tomé island) by Colston & Curry Lindahl (1986) and to *inornata* (TL Mt. Cameroon) by Urban *et al.* (1986). The species is in need of a thorough revision.

YELLOW-THROATED CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx f. flavigularis*

Gatter (1988) listed the species for Liberia and gave the symbols for rare and rainforest, but the basis for his inclusion of the species on the Liberian checklist is uncertain. An adult female with a soft-shelled egg in the oviduct was taken 13 March 1990. This may be the first specimen record for Liberia. A partial skeleton was saved. The trinomial is used as the population east of the Dahomey forest gap is being described (Dickerman 1994).

CINNAMON SCOPS OWL *Otus i. icterorhynchus*

A single adult was taken in the Wonigizi Mountains, March 1990. It was prepared as a 'schmoo' (study skin with no skeletal elements) and a full skeleton. The species was previously taken in Liberia at Mount Nimba. The four specimens from Liberia range in colour from a sandy-rufous to cinnamon, with one of the Mount Nimba specimens nearly exactly matching the type (Ghana).

RED-CHESTED OWLET *Glaucidium t. tephronotum*

Three were taken in the Wonigizi Mountains in March 1990. The species was previously collected in Liberia only at Mount Nimba. A full skin and partial skeleton, a 'schmoo' and full skeleton and a pickled specimen were saved.

LONG-TAILED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus climacurus* subsp.

The pale, buffy to sandy-buff coloured nominate form is a widespread migrant throughout the region, apparently being more common coastally. Carter took a specimen on the Lofa River, Cape Mount County, 21 December 1985.

Two dark, sedentary, semi-sedentary or perhaps irregularly migrant populations occupy the more humid belt of West Africa. *C. c. leoninus* (TL Sierra Leone) is essentially dark grey and black dorsally, the brown tones are dull, the breast band is dark grey-brown; it occurs in the west, Sierra Leone to Southern Nigeria (Lagos). A specimen of *leoninus* from Robertsport, Cape Mount Co., Liberia, 25 November 1889, is in the AMNH. The subspecies was not recognised by Fry *et al.* (1988). *C. c. sclateri* (TL Cameroon) in contrast is dark, rich warm brown and black dorsally, and has a rich brown neck band. It occurs in Cameroon and adjacent Gabon. At least occasionally *sclateri* wanders west to Sierra Leone (two specimens BMNH 1914.4.14.9 and 1966.16.112) and Liberia (the male from Mount Nimba). The other two specimens reported from Mount Nimba are migrant *climacurus*.

RED-HEADED DWARF KINGFISHER *Ceyx (Ispidina) lecontei*

The first two specimens from Liberia were from Mount Nimba. The species is represented in the AMNH collections by four taken near the Upper Dugbe River in April 1988, and eleven from the Wonigizi Mountains in March 1990. A female taken 19 March had a soft-shelled egg in the oviduct. Both skeletal and pickled material were preserved.

Dickerman (1993) demonstrated that the eastern and western populations are distinct, differing in size, colour and pattern. The names *ruficeps* (TL Ghana) and *lecontei* (TL Gabon) are available for the two populations.

CHOCOLATE-BACKED KINGFISHER *Halcyon badia*

Subspecific taxa were not recognised in this species by Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986), Fry *et al.* (1988), nor Fry *et al.* (1992). The characters assigned to *budongensis* (TL Bugoma Forest, Uganda) do not seem to hold up; however, *lopezi*, described on the basis of a single specimen from "Sipopo, Fernando Po [=Bioko]" (Alexander 1903), does seem to be valid. Amadon (1953) reported that a second specimen of *lopezi* from Bioko had a "squarish-shaped wing speculum." We also note the wing converts are blacker than those of 26 of 33 specimens from Cameroon eastwards, and that the speculum is paler and more greenish blue than in 28, and the rump is paler than in 29 of those specimens. We see no reason not to recognise the island population as distinct.

Three specimens from Liberia in the AMNH were distinct from all 33 specimens from east of the Dahomey forest gap and thus further comparisons were made in the BMNH. The western population is indeed distinct, and may be known as

***Halcyon badia obscuridorsalis* subsp. nov.**

Dickerman and Cane

Holotype. Female, AMNH 827464, 10½ km north, 1 km east of Zigida (or Ziggida), Lofa County, Liberia, elevation 560 m, collected 10 March 1990, by Robert W. Dickerman; field number RWD 21094.

Diagnosis. Crown and upper back darker, deep Maroon (Color 31), rather than Chestnut (Color 22) of Smithe (1974–1981); tertials almost black.

Measurements of the type. Wing chord 92; tail 55; exposed culmen 40.

Etymology. The trinomial refers to the dark colour of the back.

Range. Forested regions west of the Dahomey forest gap.

Discussion. In comparisons made at the BMNH only 1 of 19 (5%) of *obscuridorsalis* is sufficiently pale and reddish dorsally to be lost in the series of eastern birds, while 2 of 55 (4%) eastern birds are dark enough to fit comfortably in the series of *obscuridorsalis*. One specimen from "Benin" [=Bendel?] Province, Nigeria, is typical of nominate *badia*, while another from Omanelu, Rivers Province, is like *badia* on the crown, but like *obscuridorsalis* on the lower back.

Specimens examined. *H. b. obscuridorsalis*. Sierra Leone 2; Liberia 8; Ghana 8. *H. b. badia*. Cameroon 17; Gabon 14; Zaire 20; "Congo" 2; Uganda 3.

MALACHITE KINGFISHER *Corythornis (Alcedo) cristata galerita*

The Mount Nimba report did not use a trinomial, while Fry *et al.* (1988) used *galerita* for all of Africa, except the populations of southern Angola and southwestern Zambia south to the Cape of Good Hope. Dickerman (1989) demonstrated that *galerita* should be restricted to birds occurring west to the Dahomey forest gap. That usage was followed by Fry *et al.* (1992).

COE'S HONEYGUIDE *Melignomon eisentrauti*

A female with an enlarged ovary (ova to 6 mm) was taken in the Wonigizi Mountains 16 March 1990. This is the second locality record for Liberia. Although "Yellow-footed Honeyguide" is one of the suggested names for this species, C. G. Schmitt, who prepared this specimen, noted the tarsi and toes to be dark Cinnamon (Color 123A of Smithe 1974–1981). This may indicate seasonal changes during laying periods.

LEAST HONEYGUIDE *Indicator exilis*

Two specimens taken 9 and 12 March in the Wonigizi Mountains contained enlarged ova. They represent the second record of the species in Liberia.

Contra Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986) and Short & Horne (1988), these and the fine series from Mount Nimba are not the small, dark nominate subspecies in which the wing chord of males averages 73.5 (Short & Horne 1988) but are larger with the wing chord of males averaging 77.7 (Colston & Curry-Lindahl 1986), and they are paler. They match the type and paratype of *I. e. ansorgei* Bannerman, described from Portuguese Guinea. However, that name has been placed in *I. willcocksii* by White (1965) and Short & Horne (1988). If *willcocksii* is a valid species and not based on sub-definitive plumages of *exilis*, then the Liberian populations of *exilis* will need a new name.

SQUARE-TAILED ROUGHWING SWALLOW *Psalidoprocne n. nitens*

Three specimens taken in the Wonigizi Mountains in 1990 are the second locality record of the species for Liberia.

YELLOW-THROATED BULBUL *Crimiger olivaceus*

The species was reported for the first time in Liberia from the Mount Nimba region; it was previously rare in collections. Four specimens were taken along the Upper Dugbe River in April 1988, and nine were taken in the Wonigizi Mountains in March 1990. The species is apparently widespread and will probably be found whenever mist-nets are used in rain forests in Liberia. Skeletons and pickled specimens were preserved.

GREY GROUND THRUSH *Zoothera p. princei*

This species, like the above, is probably far more common and widespread than pre-Nimba studies indicated. Seven were taken at Mount Nimba; one was taken at Jaoudi and 8 along the Dugbe River in April 1988, and one was taken in the Wonigizi Mountains in March 1990. Skeletons and pickled specimens were preserved.

PALE-BREASTED THRUSH BABBLER *Trichastoma rufipennis extrema*

First reported in Liberia from Mount Nimba, the species is apparently common and widespread in both virgin and second-growth rainforests. Additional localities are: Dugbe River (15 specimens); Jaoudi (3); and Wonigizi Mountains (39).

RUFOUS-WINGED THRUSH BABBLER *Trichastoma rufescens*

The species was described from "Liberia" without a specific locality, and before the Nimba study, when 18 were collected, it was rare in collections. Additional localities are: Jaoudi (2), Dugbe River (4) and Wonigizi Mountains (16). The species is widespread and apparently fairly common, occurring in both virgin and second-growth rainforests. Skeletons and pickled specimens were preserved.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A bird netted at Greenville, 25 March 1988, is apparently the first specimen record for Liberia although Gatter (1988) considered it to be fairly common.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A female netted 21 March 1990 in virgin forest in the Wonigizi Mountains is the second locality record for this species in Liberia. It was previously taken at Mount Nimba.

YELLOW-BELLIED WATTLE-EYE *Platysteira c. concreta*

This species was first found in Liberia at Mount Nimba and was common there. Carter took three specimens in northern Cape Mount County in January 1986 and near Juarzon, Sinoe County in April 1986. It was also common along the Dugbe River (12 specimens) and in the Wonigizi Mountains (23).

DUSKY CRESTED FLYCATCHER *Trochocercus nigromitratus*

Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986) and Traylor (1986) both apparently followed Chapin (1953) in not recognising subspecies in the Dusky Crested Flycatcher. However, the large series now available from Liberia is consistently distinct from the even larger series available from Cameroon east to Kenya. The three names available: *nigromitratus* Reichenow 1874 (Cameroon), *kibaliensis* Alexander 1905 ("Kibali River" = Surugu or upper Uelle River, Zaire) and *intensus* Gyldenstolpe 1922 (Semliki Valley, Kiva District, Zaire) all refer to the eastern population.

First, the extent of sexual *vs* age dimorphism must be discussed. In any series of specimens some individuals have essentially unicoloured

greyish venters, while in others the belly region has a moderate amount of whitish 'underfeathers' showing. Most specimens with unicoloured venters (18 of 25, 72%) were males, while 11 of 19 (58%) of whitish-bellied birds were females. The white-bellied males were probably first-year birds, while the dark-bellied females may be older birds. Thus in making comparisons, dark-bellied birds were compared with dark-bellied and light with light. There appears to be no (or exceedingly little) colour change due to museum age within series from a region. The western birds may now be known as

Trochocercus nigromitratus colstoni subsp. nov.
Dickerman

Holotype. Adult male, AMNH 827744, collected 1 km east, 12 km north Zigida (or Ziggida), Lofa County, Liberia, on 13 March 1990 by C. Gregory Schmitt; field number CGS 5240.

Diagnosis. Similar to nominate population but slightly paler and brighter blue both dorsally and ventrally, less dull, flat dark grey. In *colstoni* there is a distinct tendency dorsally to have a white-tinged collar. Although differences between individuals are subtle when two specimens are compared, the differences when series are seen side by side are dramatic.

Measurement of the type. Wing chord 60, tail 62 exposed culmen 11.

Etymology. It is a pleasure and appropriate to name this form for Mr Peter R. Colston who prepared the bulk of the report on the large collection from Mount Nimba in the BMNH, especially the comprehensive tables of biometrics. Mr. Colston confirmed my impression of the distinctness of the two populations.

Range. Specimens examined only from Liberia and southern Nigeria, but probably occupies forested regions west of the Dahomey forest gap.

Specimens examined. *T. n. colstoni*: Liberia 29; Nigeria 1. *T. n. nigromitratus*: Cameroon 30; Gabon 1; Congo 1; Zaire 9; Uganda 11; Kenya 11.

RED-FRONTED ANT-PECKER *Parmoptila rubrifrons*

The alternate English name is amusing and worth recording, it is longer than the bird: Red-fronted Flower-pecker Weaver-finch (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1973).

Two males taken in the Wonigizi Mountains in March 1990 comprise the third specimen record of the species in Liberia. A large series was taken at Mount Nimba, and Michael F. Carter took two near Jaoudi, Grand Gedeh County, in October 1986. Gatter (1988) gave symbols indicating that it was rare to common in Liberia.

In West Africa, there are four named populations which Traylor (1968) combined under the specific name *woodhousei*. Two of these, *woodhousei* (1859) of Gabon to eastern Zaire, and *ansorgei* (1904) of Uganda, are obviously conspecific. They are essentially 'female-plumaged' and non-dimorphic (in juvenal or in definitive plumage), the adult males differing only in having a red forehead.

The other two exhibit strong dimorphism, the males (juvenile and adult) being near chestnut ventrally, while the adult females (juveniles have not been seen) are not dissimilar from *woodhousei*, but are 'scaled' rather than spotted ventrally. These two are: *rubrifrons* (1872) from Ghana, and *jamesoni* (1890) described from "Congo" and ranging from Zaire east to western Uganda. Thus the ranges of the two dimorphic populations are separated by the range of non-dimorphic *woodhousei*. To date sympatry is not known among any of the forms. Until new information becomes available, three species should be recognised.

If the dimorphic species are combined, Liberian birds cannot bear either the name *P. jamesoni rubrifrons* as in Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986), or *P. jamesoni* as in Gatter (1988); they must take the older name *rubrifrons*. It should be noted that Chapin (1953) used *jamesoni* for the chestnut-bellied Congo birds, but he treated the three forms in that region as full species.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude for the guidance, help and friendship of Alexander Peal, Head, Wildlife and National Parks of the Forest Development Authority, and to Emmanuel Emeh, George C. Fully, Joseph Folly, and Theo Freeman, administrators and staff of the FDA during the period of these studies for their support. The Liberians who were vital to the success of these ventures are too numerous to mention. We hope they all survived.

The senior author expresses his special thanks to his coauthors and to K. A. Ray and M. K. Waddington for their help and companionship in the 'bush'. The arrangements made by Angela Chapman and Christopher P. Kofron prior to our arrival in Liberia assured the success of this effort. Special gratitude is due to the curators and personnel of the BMNH for access to that magnificent collection and for their many considerations.

Support for aspects of these studies was provided by: American Museum of Natural History, National Geographic Society (grant 4250-90 to RWD), and the senior author. M. F. Carter was a member of the Peace Corps in Liberia 1985-1986. Some of the participants covered their own air travel expenses.

References:

- Alexander, B. 1903. [comments by] *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 13: 33.
- Amadon, D. 1953. Avian systematics and evolution in the Gulf of Guinea. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 100: 393-452.
- Cane, W. P. & Carter, M. F. 1988. Significant range extension for *Nectarinia reichenbachii* in West Africa. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 108: 52-54.
- Chapin, J. P. 1953. The birds of the Belgian Congo. Part 3. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 75A.
- Colston, P. R. & Curry-Lindahl, K. 1986. *The Birds of Mount Nimba, Liberia*. British Museum (Natural History).
- Dickerman, R. W. 1989. Notes on the Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis (Alcedo) cristata*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 109: 158-159.
- Dickerman, R. W. 1993. On the validity of *Ceyx (Mioceyx) lecontei ruficeps*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 113: 255-257.
- Dickerman, R. W. 1994. Notes on birds from Africa with descriptions of three new subspecies. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 114: 274-278.
- Fry, C. H., Fry, K. & Harris, A. 1992. *Kingfishers, Bee-eaters and Rollers*. Christopher Helm and Princeton Univ. Press.
- Fry, C. H., Keith, S. & Urban, E. K. (eds) 1988. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol. 3. Academic Press.
- Gatter, W. 1988. The birds of Liberia (West Africa). A preliminary list with status and open questions. *Verh. Orn. Ges. Bayern* 24: 689-723.

- Keith, S., Urban, E. K. & Fry, C. H. (eds) 1992. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol 4. Academic Press.
- Mackworth-Præd, C. W. & Grant, C. H. B. 1973. *Birds of Central and Western Africa*. Longman.
- Peters, J. L. 1937. *Check-list of Birds of the World*. Vol 20. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard.
- Short, L. L. & Horne, J. F. M. 1988. Indicatoridae. Pp. 486–512 in Fry *et al.* (*supra*).
- Smithe, F. B. 1974, 1975, 1981. *Naturalist's Color Guide*. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.
- Traylor, M. A., Jr. 1986. [African Sylviidae] in E. Mayr & G. W. Cottrell (eds), *Check-list of Birds of the World*. Vol 11. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard.
- Urban, E. K., Fry, C. H. & Keith, S. (eds) 1986. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol. 2. Academic Press.
- White, C. M. N. 1965. *A Revised Check List of African Non Passerine Birds*. Government Printer, Lusaka, Zambia.

Address: Drs Robert W. Dickerman and W. Parker Cane, Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, NY 10024. Michael F. Carter, Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, Colorado 80601. Angela Chapman, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803. C. Gregory Schmitt, Department of Game and Fish, State Capitol, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504, U.S.A.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1994

Notes on birds from Africa with descriptions of three new subspecies

by Robert W. Dickerman

Received 20 November 1993

While identifying specimens in three collections from Liberia, recently received by the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) (see Dickerman *et al.* 1994), several problems became evident that affect the nomenclature of species beyond the limits of Liberia. Unless noted, all specimens examined were in the collections of the AMNH or British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH). In the text, type locality is abbreviated to 'TL', and "western" refers to populations with ranges west of the Dahomey forest gap. All measurements are in millimeters.

BLUE-SPOTTED WOOD DOVE *Turtur a. afer*

No subspecies were recognised by Urban *et al.* (1986) nor by Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986). However *mearnsi* (TL Ethiopia) is definitely paler and larger than nominate *afer*. The wing chord of 9 *mearnsi* (sexes alike) measured 113–121 (mean 116.4, s.d. 2.1), while the wings of 10 West African *afer* (5 each sex) measured 101–110 (mean 106.9, s.d. 3.0). Urban *et al.* (1986) gave wing measurements for five males and five females from South Africa as: 107–112 (109) and 109–112 (110) respectively. It should be noted that an adult female from the highlands of northern Cameroon (AMNH 415096) is both dark and large (wing 117), and perhaps represents an isolated population of larger birds.